

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 USUN 5650

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, UNGA, RQ, CU, US
SUBJECT: PUERTO RICO AND THE COMMITTEE OF 24 (C-24)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE DECISION OF THE THE C-24 TO ADJOURN
CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO UNTIL NEXT YEAR ONLY
BOUGHT US A RELATIVELY
SHORT RESPITE FROM PRESSURE ON THIS
ISSUE. THE "ADJOURNMENT" STRATEGY IS INHERENTLY PRECARIOUS AND,
IF ITS FAILS NEXT YEAR, THE COMMITTEE WILL IN ALL LIKELIHOOD
ADOPT A RESOLUTION CATEGORICALLY AFFIRMING PUERTO RICO'S
COLONIAL STATUS. ALTHOUGH THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF
THE QUESTION OF PUERTO RICO MAY BE MANAGEABLE IN THE NEAR
TERM, DOMESTIC ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEMS ARE INCREASINGLY
VOLATILE AND ALSO REQUIRE SUSTAINED HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION. WHILE
WE HAVE SOME TIME, WE SHOULD: ENGAGE IN VIGOROUS EFFORTS
TO GET THE CUBANS TO MODERATE THEIR STAND ON PUERTO RICO;
KEEP LOBBYING; AND CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH THE COMMITTEE
OF 24 ON AMERICAN SAMOA, GUAM
AND THE US VIRGIN ISLANDS.

2. FOR ALONGER-TERM SOLUTION, USUN BELIEVES IT IS ESSENTIAL
TO FOCUS SUSTAINED HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION ON ALL ISSUES
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RELATED TO PUERTO RICO'S POLITICAL STATUS. END SUMMARY.

3. INTRODUCTION:
C-24 ADJOURNMENT OF CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO
IN AUGUST WAS ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF TEMPORARY AND
TENUOUS HOLDING ACTIONS. CONTINUING TO SEEK ADJOURN-
MENT FROM YEAR TO YEAR IS A PRECARIOUS STRATEGY SINCE A

ONE OR TWO-VOTE SHIFT--OR THE ABSENCE OF A PROPONENT OF ADJOURNMENT--COULD TIP THE BALANCE. WERE ADJOURNMENT TO FAIL, POSSIBLY NEXT YEAR, THE COMMITTEE WOULD PROBABLY ADOPT A RESOLUTION CATEGORICALLY AFFIRMING PUERTO RICO'S "COLONIAL" STATUS.

IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE OF CUBA, WHICH REMAINS THE PRINCIPAL PROPONENT OF C-24 CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO, OR SOME IMPORANT STATUS DEVELOPMENT IN PUERTO RICO, THIS ISSUE WILL REMAIN ACTIVE WITH THE CONTINUING DANGER THAT EFFORTS TO POSTPONE ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION WILL EVENTUALLY FAIL. ALTHOUGH IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT ADOPTION OF SUCH A RESOLUTION BY THE COMMITTEE WOULD HAVE NO GREAT INTRINSIC IMPORTANCE AND WOULD NOT NECESSARILY HAVE THE EFFECT OF CAUSING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONSIDER PUERTO RICO, IT COULD INVITE FAR-RANGING REPERCUSSIONS IN THE US PUBLIC AND CONGRESS. IT WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE AN IMPORTANT IMPACT IN PUERTO RICO, CONTRIBUTING AN ADDITIONAL INGREDIENT TO ALREADY VOLATILE PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL ATTITUDES.

4. WE SEEK HERE TO REVIEW THE PROBLEM IN ITS BROAD PERSPECTIVE AND SUGGEST NECESSARY HOLDING TACTICS FOR THE SHORT TERM. MOST IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, WE WANT TO UNDERSCORE OUR CONCLUSION THAT THE UN PUERTO RICO PROBLEM IS REALLY A US DOMESTIC PROBLEM. IT CAN ONLY
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BE SOLVED BY A FOCUSSED AND CONCENTRATED EFFORT BY THE WHOLE US GOVERNMENT. END INTRODUCTION.

5. PROSPECTS:

THE NET EFFECT OF THE C-24'S ADJOURNEMTN OF CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO ROCI WAS TO BUY US A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME TO TRY TO WORK OUT SOME MORE PERMANENT AND SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO WHAT HAS BECOME A PERENNIAL AND PRECARIOUS STRUGGLE. USUN BELIEVES THAT URGENT ATTENTION TO THIS PROBLEM IS REQUIRED BEFORE WE ARE FACED WITH C-24 CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO NEXT YEAR. ALTHOUGH THE VOTE FOR ADJOURNMENT WAS BETTER THIS YEAR (11-7-2) THAN IN 1975 (11-9-2) AND CONSIDERABLY BETTER THAN THE SINGLE-VOTE MARGIN WE WERE ESTIMATING IN 1976, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT SIMILAR TACTICS CANNOT BE COUNTED ON FOR MUCH LONGER; THE MARGIN IS TOO PRECARIOUS. ALSO, VARIOUS COMMITTEE MEMBERS(INTER ALIA YUGOSLAVIA) HAVE TOLD US THAT THE COMMITTEE'S "DIGNITY" CANNOT WITHSTAND REPEATED ADJOURNMENT OF THE QUESTION; EITHER IT CONSIDERS IT OR IT DOESN'T. THE SITUATION IS AGGRAVATED BY STATEMENTS BY THE LARGE NUMBER OF PETITIONERS WHO APPEARED THIS YEAR, INCLUDING PUERTO RICAN STATEHOOD AND

COMMONWEALTH SUPPORTERS, AS WELL AS THE
INDEPENDENTISTAS, THAT PUERTO RICO IS A "COLONY" OR
THAT THE PRESENT STATUS HAS "COLONIAL VESTIGES," AND
BY THE GOVERNOR'S COMMENTS ALONG THE SAME LINES.
FINALLY, THE PERIODIC NORDIC ROTATION WILL SOMEWHAT
DEGRADE OUR TACTICAL POSITION NEXT YEAR WHEN SWEDEN WILL
REPLACE NORWAY AS THE NORDIC MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE.
WHILE WE CAN PROBABLY GET A VOTE FOR ADJOURNMENT FROM
SWEDEN, WE DOUBT THAT IT WILL PROVIDE THE TACTICAL
SUPPORT WITHIN THE COMMITTEE WHICH WE HAVE GOTTEN FROM
NORWAY. CHILEAN SUPPORT MAY ALSO BE IN DOUBT IN 1978.

6. THE BROADER PERSPECTIVE:
IF ONE ACCEPTS OUR OWN DEFINITION OF THE QUESTION,
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PUERTO RICO IS ESSENTIALLY A DOMESTIC PROBLEM, ALBIET
WITH IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL OVERTONES. ALTHOUGH THE
INTERNATIONAL FACE OF THE QUESTION IS NATURALLY THAT WHICH
HAS PREOCCUPIED US IN USUN AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT, IT
IS IN OUR VIEW MUCH LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE DOMESTIC QUESTION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 USUN 5650

PUERTO RICO'S CONTINUING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ILLS,
INCOUDING POLITCIIALLY-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE (ON THE
MAINLAND INCLUDING NEW YORK AS WELL AS IN PUERTO RICO),

THE CONTINUING ACRIMONY AND BELLICOSITY OF THE STATUS DEBATE, AND THE "UNCERTAIN FUTURE" FACING PUERTO RICANS IN THE CONTINENTAL US (THE TITLE OF THE REPORT OF THE US COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS) ARE INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS PROBLEMS WHICH UNDERLY THE CONTINUING, FRUSTRATING ATTENTION IN THE UN. WE CAN HOPEFULLY CONTINUE TO HOLD THE LINE AT THE UN FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER FEW YEARS AND, IF NECESSARY, WE CAN DESCRIBE WHATEVER ACTION THE COMMITTEE MAY EVENTUALLY TAKE AS OF NO GREAT SIGNIFICANCE, BUT THE PRESSURES ARE LIKELY TO RESULT IN THE US BEING LABELED A COLONIAL POWER, AN IRONIC PROSPECT IN AN ERA WHEN WE ARE MOVING SO FAST IN AN OPPOSITE DIRECTION IN OTHER AREAS. WHATEVER ITS PRECISE TERMS, A UN DECISION WOULD BE AN UNACCEPTABLE CRITICISM DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN TO THE US CONGRESS AND PUBLIC. MOREOVER, SUCH A DECISION WOULD BE USED-AS THE ANNUAL UN DEBATE IS ALREADY BEING USED-BY THESE PUERTO RICAN ELEMENTS LEAST FRIENDLY TO THE US GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO MAGNIFY PUERTO RICAN AND OTHER PRESSURES FOR EXTREME "SOLUTIONS" TO THE PROBLEM.

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7. HOLDING THE LINE ON PUERTO RICO:

AMONG THOSE THINGS WHICH WE CAN AND SHOULD DO TO TRY TO HOLD THE LINE AGAINST C-24 ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION WHICH DEFINES PUERTO RICO AS A COLONY ARE THE FOLLOWING:

A) CONVINCE THE CUBANS TO LAY OFF

CUBA STILL HOLDS THE KEY TO ANY DEFINITIVE SOLUTION OF THE ISSUE IN THE NEAR TERM. CUBA IS THE PRIME EXPONENT OF UN CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO, AND COULD, WE BELIEVE, REIN IN THE COMMITTEE IF IT CHOSE.

USUN RECOMMENDS CONTINUING VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO GET CUBA TO MODERATE ITS POSITION ON PUERTO RICO IN ALL UN FORUMS.

?) KEEP LOBBYING

WHILE OUR NON-THREATENING LOBBYING WAS EFFECTIVE THIS YEAR, A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS, INCLUDING CUBA, CLAIMED THAT THEY WERE UNAWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE TO US. WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND A CONTINUING COMPREHENSIVE AND SYSTEMATIC CAMPAIGN IN BOTH NEW YORK AND CAPITALS TO INSURE THAT NO SUCH EXCUSE IS AVAILABLE TO ANYONE IN THE FUTURE.

C) CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH THE C-24 ON OTHER ISSUES WE BELIEVE THAT THE GENERALLY HIGHER PROFILE WE HAVE MAINTAINED AT C-24 MEETINGS, THE MORE DETAILED AND COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENTS WE HAVE MADE TO THE COMMITTEE ON US TERRITORIES FOR WHICH WE RECOGNIZE COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE INVITATION TO A C-24 VISITING MISSION TO THE US VIRGIN ISLANDS, HAVE ALL SERVED TO IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE COMMITTEE VIS-A-VIS THE US. THESE EFFORTS SHOULD BE CONTINUED AND WE RECOMMEND

THAT AN INVITATION BE EXTENDED TO ANOTHER C-24 VISITING
MISSION NEXT YEAR, TO EITHER AMERICAN SAMOA OR GUAM.

D) CONTINUE TO INVITE C-24 PERM REPS TO
PUERTO RICO

ALTHOUGH THE ACCEPTANCE RECORD FOR THE INVITA-
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TIONS THAT THE GOVERNOR AND UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
OF THE USA HAVE EXTENDED TO SELECTED C-24 AND OTHER
UN PERM REPS HAS BEEN VERY POOR, WE NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE
THAT THE FACT OF THE INVITATION IS HELPFUL IN THAT IT
CONVEYES THAT WE HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE. THE GENERAL
IMPACT OF SUCH VISITS IN THE PAST HAS BEEN POSITIVE AND
INVITATIONS TO VISIT PUERTO RICO IN EARLY 1978 MAY
RESULT IN SOME ACCEPTANCES.

8. NEED FOR HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION:

THE ABOVE TACTICAL MEASURES CAN AT BEST ONLY BUY US
SOME MORE TIME. THE BASIC ATTITUDES IN THE C-24 ARE
SHARPENED BECAUSE OF ITS COMPOSITION AND LIMITED MEMBER-
SHIP, BUT THEY REFLECT A GENERAL PREDISPOSITION IN THE
UN COMMUNITY AT LARGE TO QUESTION THE BIG POWERS ABOUT
THEIR TREATMENT OF DEPENDENT TERRITORIES. THE WRONG-
HEADED CHALLENGE TO OUR BASIC POSITION AGAINST UN
JURISDICTION APPEARS TO US UNLIKELY TO DISAPPEAR OR EVEN
WEAKEN IN THE FUTURE. WHILE WE CANNOT BE COMPELLED TO DO
ANYTHING AGAINST OUR NATIONAL WILL, THE ISSUE SEEMS
CERTAIN TO BE AN INCREASINGLY CONTENTIOUS IRRITATION AND
DEBIT TO OUR POSTURE OF LEADERSHIP IN THE UN.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 USUN 5650

SINCE ACTIONS IN NEW YORK CANNOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM,
WE BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE AS A GOVERNMENT START
NOW TO STUDY THE ISSUES RELATED TO PUERTO RICO'S POLITICAL
STATUS. THE DOMESTIC RAMIFICATIONS OF THE ISSUES AND
THEIR COMPLEXITY REQUIRE THAT OUR APPROACH BE SERIOUS,
FOCUSSED AND AT A SUFFICIENTLY HIGH LEVEL TO ENCOMPASS
THE INTERESTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF MANY DEPARTMENTS
AND AGENCIES. THE OBJECT OF THIS EFFORT IS A
SUSTAINED APPROACH TO POSITIVE US ACTION ON THE
PUERTO RICO STATUS PROBLEM TO FORESTALL HARMFUL UN
INITIATIVES THAT CAN ONLY EXACERBATE OUR DOMESTIC
DIFFICULTIES. USUN BELIEVES IT CAN MAKE AN IMPORTANT
CONTRIBUTION TO THESE DELIBERATIONS.
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Message Attributes

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